

# Dr M: Viet pullout may cause civil war in Kampuchea

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KUALA LUMPUR, Thursday — Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said an untimely withdrawal of Vietnamese troops from Kampuchea can cause a civil war in the country.

He told Kampuchean leader Prince Norodom Sihanouk that Malaysia was concerned about this possibility because "anything can happen in the event of a vacuum caused by the withdrawal."

The two leaders met for three hours at the Prime Minister's office here today after the prince arrived here for a four-day official visit.

Foreign Affairs secretary-general Datuk Yusof Hitam, who briefed reporters on the meeting, said Dr Mahathir raised the possibility of the civil war during their talks.

He said Prince Sihanouk, who resigned as head of the UN-recognised Coalition Government of Democratic Kampuchea (CGDK) last July, took note of Dr Mahathir's concern and said that he also wanted to avoid civil war.

The CGDK is now led by Prince Sihanouk's son, Prince Norodom Ranariddh who was also present at today's talks.

Prince Sihanouk is seeking for the CGDK — comprising the Sihanoukists, Son Sann's nationalists and

the Khmer Rouge — and the Hanoi-backed government in Phnom Penh to share power in Kampuchea.

Datuk Yusof said Dr Mahathir told the prince that it was good now that the four parties were actively pursuing the path of peace and he hoped they would be successful.

Datuk Yusof said Dr Mahathir drove home the point that the Kampuchean issue was for the Kampuchians themselves to resolve although they might get sympathy and understanding from other nations.

He said when Dr Mahathir raised the possibility of a civil war in Kampuchea he was thinking in terms of an untimely withdrawal.

"An untimely departure is not far from a comprehensive settlement but it creates a vacuum and anything can happen in that situation."

Datuk Yusof added, however, that the prince gave an assurance that he would try to avoid such a situation and felt his plan for a four-party coalition to rule Kampuchea could make that possibility remote.

With regard to the CGDK's seat in the United Nations, Datuk Yusof said it was Malaysia's view that it should remain so.